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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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MODERN FARMING

Background Leaflet Gives Data. American agriculture has advanced more the past 50 years than in all the prior years of our history. Consider some of the statistics on our Nation's largest industry: One out of every five jobs in private employment is related to agriculture. One hour of farm labor produces over seven times as much food and other crops as it did in 1919-1921. American farmers met American consumer needs: In 1971 each of us consumed 192 pounds of red meats, 50 pounds of chicken, 121 pounds of potatoes, 81 pounds of fresh fruits, and used over 19 pounds of cotton and $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of wool. A little leaflet, "Background on U.S. Agriculture" (L-491) gives these figures and many more in describing the role the farmer plays in the welfare of the Nation's economy and citizens. Single free copies of the leaflet are available from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Bulk copies may be purchased for 10 cents a copy from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

FOOD GUIDE

For Older Folks Only. Good food is important and one of life's great pleasures -- whether you are eight or eighty. It is, in fact, a necessity for good health, for normal weight, and for that feeling of well-being that helps you meet each day rested, alert, and ready to cope. For persons closer to eighty than to eight, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has recently issued a food guide designed to help in planning and preparing nutritious meals. The revised "Food Guide for Older Folks" gives tips on buying food and time and energy-saving hints, along with how to plan and prepare menus to meet specific needs. Although people choose from the same foods as they grow older, their needs for some of the nutrients and for calories change. A daily food guide in the booklet shows how to meet these needs. The basic four food groups are explained and a list of foods that satisfy requirements in each group is included along with recommended daily amounts. There are sample menus and more than 30 recipes that can be prepared with a minimum of time, preparation and equipment. Copies of "Food Guide for Older Folks" (G-17) are available for 20 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.



HAVING YOUR CAKE

And Eating It - - Despite Your Allergy. Persons allergic to wheat, eggs, and/or milk must refrain from eating breads, cakes, and pastries or check package labels v-e-r-y carefully. Another course of action to consider is to bake them at home. A USDA booklet can be of help to those who make the last choice. "Baking For People With Food Allergies" (G-147) includes recipes for such goodies as cornmeal muffins (without eggs, milk, or wheat), pineapple upside-down cake (without eggs, milk, or wheat), and pie crusts (without eggs or wheat). Copies of the booklet are available for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

THE INSIDE

About Farmers Home Administration Loans. FHA financed houses, whether newly constructed or existing new structures, compare in quality and design to other dwellings around them -- ranch style, ramblers, bi-levels, split foyers, or any of many designs. And the comparison does not necessarily end with the outside of the house. When the FHA computer spells out that most of the houses in a given section of a community come equipped with range and refrigerator, the FHA county supervisor can include the cost of these household items in the loan. If houses in the area are normally sold with washer and dryer, funds for these may also be included. Back outside, the FHA can provide enough cash in the housing loan to buy foundation plantings, seeds or sod for lawns, and even yard fencing, walks, and driveways. The agency even goes a step further for borrowers in areas where tornadoes are unwelcome visitors: FHA rural housing loans can include allowances for the construction of storm cellars. The USDA credit agency advances housing loans to borrowers living in communities of 10,000 population or less and in the open countryside and who are unable to obtain needed financing from other sources.

WATCH THE BIRDIE

Extend A Midwestern Invitation. Dedicated birdwatchers have been known to travel miles in all kinds of weather to observe feathered friends. For them -- and for those less dedicated to the sport -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service has prepared a new brochure that can help turn the tables: The birds come to the watcher. The colorful publication, "Invite Birds To Your Home -- Conservation Plantings for the Midwest," (PA-982) gives some tips to midwestern homeowners on how to attract robins, cardinals, and other birds common in the area into their neighborhoods. It suggests how to create a landscape design, mentions the needs of various plants for sun, soil, and water, and lists food plants preferred by the birds. The brochure is a companion to an earlier publication, "Invite Birds To Your Home -- Conservation Plantings for the Northeast," (PA-940). Single copies of either publication are available free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

APRIL PLENTIFULS

Eggs Lead The List. The versatile egg is the featured item on the April Plentiful Foods List which includes some juicy items: cranberry juice cocktail and canned cranberry sauce; frozen concentrated grape juice and canned grape juice; apple juice and canned applesauce; prune juice and prunes; canned pears; milk and dairy products; and potatoes and potato products. For May, the Plentifuls List will include broiler-fryers; milk and nonfat dry milk; fresh potatoes and potato products; canned peaches; canned fruit cocktail; and eggs.

ENVIRONMENTAL THRUST

Challenges Pollution, Ugliness, and Blight. Alert citizens everywhere see pressing environmental problems on all sides -- the need for safe drinking water, sanitary landfills, improved rural housing, noise reduction, improved recreational resources. The regular on-going activities of USDA are concerned with these and every aspect of our environment. Throughout the U.S., hundreds of local, State, and Federal offices are staffed with people whose daily duties relate to the environment. USDA's Environmental Thrust campaign aims to muster all of these resources to help rural counties and towns build and protect the quality of life. A new USDA slide presentation, titled "Environmental Thrust," was prepared to inform the public of the resources available -- for the asking -- through this national network of offices. The 50-frame color presentation describes the Environmental Thrust campaign which is designed to get things started by helping citizens initiate and then carry out community projects. The slide set uses artwork to tell the story of a group of people concerned with the appearance of their community and how they get help for various projects. A cassette carrying music and dialogue between several voices helps tell the story in a light vein. The slide set can be ordered for \$13.00 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip can be purchased for \$5.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. The cassette is available from either source for \$3.00.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It Matters To USDA Inspectors. To be labeled with a particular name, a Federally inspected meat or poultry product must meet standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For example, chili con carne must contain at least 40 percent meat; meat curry, at least 50 percent meat; and sukiyaki, at least 30 percent meat. A USDA publication, available in both English and Spanish, offers consumers a ready reference to these standards. The publication lists the percentages of meat, poultry, or other ingredients that USDA inspectors require in some 200 processed meat and poultry products -- from baby food to frozen meat tacos to chicken cacciatore. For shoppers who want to know that what they see on the label is what they are getting when they buy meat and poultry products, the publication can be a useful shopping tool. "Standards for Meat and Poultry Products -- A Consumer Reference List" or the Spanish version, "Patrones de Productos de Carne de Res y de Aves de Corral -- Lista de referencia del consumidor," can be obtained free by writing to SERVICE, Office of Information, Room 461-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SERVING SMALL GROUPS

From Fifteen To Fifty. In preparing food for small groups, such as a club luncheon, a small church or community supper, or a get-together for a big family--there is sometimes the worry of not enough food to go around or piles of food left over. For these occasions, -- when it pays to use taste-tested recipes that yield a given amount for food -- a new USDA publication can be a big help. "Cooking For Small Groups" suggests 12 lunch and dinner menus and gives more than 35 recipes for main dishes, vegetables, salads, breads, and desserts. Calories per serving are listed with recipes along with variations on serving. Yields of the recipes are for 25 or more servings, but a handy section of the booklet gives two methods for adjusting the recipe size up to 50 servings or down to 15, as you need. Tips on how to keep the food safe to eat while it is being prepared and held for serving are included in one section. Copies of "Cooking For Small Groups" (G-197) are available for 15 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

NEW SLIDE PRESENTATION

House Design With People In Mind. "Planning the Bedroom" is the latest in a continuing series of USDA slide presentations to help families develop an awareness of family needs in house design. The 32-frame slide set gives tips that can make the bedroom more livable and comfortable. It tells where bedrooms should be located in relation to other rooms in the home, where closets, windows and doors should be, how much room is needed for cleaning under beds or opening dresser drawers, the types of lighting needed. The slide set can be ordered for \$13.00 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. As a filmstrip, "Planning the Bedroom" may be purchased for \$5.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A cassette carrying the sound track is available for \$3.00 for automatic projection with both slide set and filmstrip.

USE FOR TREE WASTES

Mulching With Bark. You can improve your home landscape while you help the environment. That's the message from USDA's Forest Service scientists who have been investigating the uses of excess bark material. Raw bark accumulates rapidly at sawmills where logs are processed through debarking machines before being sawed into lumber. Usually sawmill owners dispose of the bark, considered a troublesome waste material, by burning it. Naturally, this adds to air pollution. To help curtail this pollution, as well as to make use of this wasted but good material, and to help foster jobs in rural areas, the Forest Service undertook a research program to study the prospects for utilization of bark. Results indicate that commercial use of the bark as mulch holds much promise. What can bark mulch do for you and your garden? Well, it can protect your plants' delicate roots; improve your soil's texture; save yard maintenance time; and make your landscaping more beautiful and exciting. A limited number of copies of a booklet describing bark mulch and its uses can be obtained from Information Services, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082. Ask for booklet NE-INF-11-1972, "Bark Mulch: Natural Artistry Around Your House."

WILDLIFE FOR TOMORROW

Protecting A Natural Treasure. One of the Nation's natural resource treasures is its wildlife. And one of the major and long time protectors of wildlife habitat is USDA's Forest Service. More than a third of all big game existing in the Nation and 58 of the rare and endangered wildlifespecies find homes on or near National Forest Systems lands. Under the Forest Service's habitat improvement program, several big game species have increased dramatically in numbers. These are among the highlights described in a new booklet, "Wildlife for Tomorrow." The Forest Service booklet traces the history of wildlife in America since the first explorers and puts in perspective early inroads on the wildlife populations. It describes subsequent laws and regulatory agencies charged with wildlife protection and propagation. Color photographs and illustrations identify many of the Nation's wild species. Copies of "Wildlife for Tomorrow" (PA-989) are available for 60 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone: (202) DU8-5437. Please include your zipcode.